


DNREC reminds Delawareans to be 'SepticSmart' this week and take good care of their septic systems

DOVER – This week, Governor Jack Markell, DNREC Secretary  David Small and DNREC's Division of Water in partnership with the Delaware On-site Wastewater Recycling Association (DOWRA) are joining the EPA to promote national SepticSmart Week in Delaware by reminding residents about proper septic system care and maintenance, assisting local agencies with homeowner education and awareness, and educating local decision makers about infrastructure options to improve and sustain their communities.

In signing a proclamation declaring Sept. 19-23 SepticSmart Week in Delaware, Governor Markell encouraged residents, communities and municipalities to do their part in maintaining the septic systems connected to their homes, offices and businesses. "Residents and our environment benefit from properly designed, installed, operated and maintained septic systems, and in order to maximize these benefits, it takes teamwork between septic system owners, septic professionals and state and local regulators," Governor Markell said.

"Proper septic system use and care are vital to protecting public health, preserving our groundwater, wetlands and waterways, and avoiding costly repairs that can result from neglect," said Secretary Small. "With more than 70,000 septic systems in use treating wastewater from homes and businesses throughout Delaware, this week is an excellent opportunity to raise public awareness and remind residents to maintain their septic systems."

DNREC's Division of Water recommends these do's and don'ts to be a responsible and successful septic system owner:

- Have your septic system inspected and pumped every three years by a qualified professional, according to DNREC recommendations and permits.
- Contact a DNREC-licensed Class E septic system contractor if you have a problem with your disposal system or suspect it may be failing.
- Repair leaks and use water-efficient fixtures to avoid overloading your septic system.
- Use soaps and detergents that are low-suds, biodegradable and low-phosphate or phosphate-free.
- Discard non-biodegradable products, such as dental floss, disposable wipes and cat litter, in the trash instead of flushing them.
- Avoid pouring harsh products, such as oils, grease, chemicals, paint and medications, down the drain; these products may disrupt the essential decomposition processes in your septic tank.
- Do not use any additives in your septic system – additives are not allowed by DNREC septic regulations.
- Maintain plants and vegetation near your septic system to ensure roots do not block drains.
- Keep cars and heavy vehicles parked away from the septic tank and drainfield to avoid damaging or crushing its components.
- Do not place sheds, decks or swimming pools over the existing drainfield or the spare (reserve) area.
- Don't climb into a septic tank or pump tank. Methane and hydrogen sulfide gases, which are present from the decomposition processes, may cause illness or death.
- Prior to selling your house, have a Class H septic system inspection in accordance with DNREC regulations.

To learn more about septic system care and maintenance, visit [Simply Septics: A Guide for Homeowners about Onsite Wastewater](#)

[Treatment and Disposal Systems](#) on the DNREC website, or contact the Division of Water at 302-739-9947 or 302-739-9948.

To learn more about the EPA's SepticSmart Week campaign, visit www.epa.gov/septic/septicsmart-week-2016.

Founded in 1996, the **Delaware On-site Wastewater Recycling Association (DOWRA)** is Delaware's local branch of the National On-site Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA). DOWRA represents professionals from all aspects of the on-site wastewater industry's public and private sectors, including soils scientists, designers, engineers, inspectors, contractors, pumpers, operators, equipment suppliers and regulators. With more than 200 members, DOWRA facilitates networking among these professionals to work collaboratively and collectively. For more information about DOWRA, visit www.dowra.org.

Media Contact: Joanna Wilson, DNREC Public Affairs, 302-739-9902; Governors Proclamation attached.

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